



**TOWN OF MANSFIELD
ORDINANCE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, April 5, 2012
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
Conference Room B**

**6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Chair Carl Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call
 - Present- Keane, Lindsey, Schaefer, Moran
 - Also Present: Dennis O'Brien (Town Attorney) Members of the Agriculture Committee: Al Cyr, Vicky Wetherell, Wes Bell (arrived at 8:15). Staff: Jennifer Kaufman
- II. Approval of March 8, 2012 minutes-*Keane moved to approve the minutes of March 8, 2012, Lindsey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*
- III. Old Business
 - a. Right to Farm Ordinance and Municipal Tax Incentives for Farms
 - **Right to Farm (RTF) Ordinance-** The subcommittee reviewed and discussed comments from the Conservation Commission's March meeting. After a great deal of discussion, the committee decided that the ordinance should still mirror the state statute, which states that farmers must follow generally accepted agricultural practices, state public health and DEEP regulations. Municipal ordinances must also be followed. The committee also agreed to add a statement in the "Findings and Purpose" section, second paragraph after ecological value stating "while being respectful of the land and conscious of potential impacts on natural resources." Kaufman will make the suggested changes for review by O'Brien. The committee will review the revised ordinance at the next meeting.
 - **Farm Property Tax Abatement** – O'Brien walked the committee members through the CGS § 12-81m, which allows towns to abate up to 50 percent of the property taxes for several types of farm businesses. *Questions from the last meeting were reviewed and discussed by O'Brien.*
 1. The assessor can include clear standards and guidelines. The group agreed to add the \$15K expenses or gross revenues. The assessor will be the one to determine whether the applicant is eligible for the abatement but the Town Council has ultimate approval.
 2. The abatement is shorter for leases than for property owners to allow flexibility for property owners.
 3. The abatement can be renewed after 5 years.
 4. Lindsey suggested that there be a provision in the ordinance that if an applicant were denied they could go to the board of assessment appeals for review.

Attorney O'Brien agreed to revise the ordinance per the discussion. The revised ordinance will be reviewed at the next meeting.

- IV. Public Comment-None
 - V. Next Meeting Date-Jennifer will coordinate with Sara-Ann to schedule a meeting. Thursdays at 6 pm seemed to work for the group.
 - VI. Adjourn-Lindsey motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:15. Moran seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Adjournment